



## Essential Element #4: Psychotherapy

### OVERVIEW

Psychotherapy is essential to recovery and the overall success of any Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) team (Heinssen, Goldstein, & Azrin, 2014). Psychotherapy may restore feelings of wellness, help individuals develop healthy coping strategies, help people process their experiences of illness, improve illness management, and address comorbidities (Heinssen et al., 2014). The duration, frequency, and format (one-on-one vs. group) are determined by individual needs and preferences (Heinssen et al., 2014).

### MAJOR FUNCTIONS

While the psychotherapy function may vary depending upon the local context, major responsibilities of any CSC psychotherapist include:

- Use evidence-based cognitive and behaviorally-oriented strategies
- Use flexible approaches that take each person's preferences into account (Meyer-Kalos, 2017)
- Listen to people's needs and goals and tailor the approach accordingly (Meyer-Kalos, 2017)
- Focus on strengths (Meyer-Kalos, 2017)
- Engage in shared decision making (Nossel, 2017)
- Help people process the trauma of experiencing psychosis, as well as any past trauma (Dixon, 2017)
- Support people in meeting their goals for relationships, including friendships, dating, and other social interactions
- Educate individuals and families about psychosis and provide support (Dixon, 2017)
- Help individuals develop healthy coping and illness management strategies to reduce psychosis, depression, and anxiety (Dixon, 2017)

- Teach suicide prevention strategies (Dixon, 2017)
- Reduce people's internalized stigma (Meyer-Kalos, 2017)
- Support communication between individuals and other team members on topics such as medication concerns (Meyer-Kalos, 2017)
- Use specific techniques (such as simple, concrete communication and repetition) to help address feelings of ambivalence, problematic substance use, and cognitive challenges

### OUTCOMES

When psychotherapy is strong, CSC programs will exhibit outcomes such as:

1. Improved functioning among people being served (Heinssen et al., 2014)
2. Reduced rates of comorbidities (e.g., substance use) (Heinssen et al., 2014)
3. Restored feelings of wellness (Heinssen et al., 2014)
4. Improved coping and resilience (Heinssen et al., 2014)
5. Lowered risks of further mental health issues (Heinssen et al., 2014)

### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The role of the psychotherapist may vary across different CSC models. For example, in the Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode (RAISE) Connection Program, a recovery coach provided psychotherapy services (Heinssen et al., 2014). In the RAISE Early Treatment Program, the psychotherapist role was sometimes combined with the case management role, and the psychotherapist sometimes had a caseload outside of the CSC team (Heinssen et al., 2014). Despite these differences, however, the core function of psychotherapy

is essential to the success of the program.

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## Resources

For further information to support CSC psychotherapists, please see:

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode (RAISE)  
[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/index.shtml?utm\\_source=rss\\_readers&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=rss\\_full](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/index.shtml?utm_source=rss_readers&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=rss_full)
  - “OnTrackNY: The Development of a Coordinated Specialty Care Program for Individuals Experiencing Early Psychosis”  
<http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/abs/10.1176/appi.ps.201600512>
  - “Comprehensive Versus Usual Community Care for First-Episode Psychosis: 2-Year Outcomes from the NIMH RAISE Early Treatment Program” <http://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2015.15050632>
  - OnTrack Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis Manual II: Implementation  
[https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/csc-for-fep-manual-ii-implementation-manual\\_147093.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/csc-for-fep-manual-ii-implementation-manual_147093.pdf)
  - The NAVIGATE Team Members’ Guide <https://raiseetp.org/studymanuals/Team%20Guide%20Manual.pdf>
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## References

- Dixon, L. (2017, January 13). *Dr. Lisa Dixon: First episode psychosis and person-centered care* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPuxjydgPc8&feature=youtu.be>
- Heinssen, R. K., Goldstein, A. B., & Azrin, S. T. (2014). *Evidence-based treatments for first episode psychosis: Components of Coordinated Specialty Care*. Retrieved from [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/nimh-white-paper-csc-for-fep\\_147096.pdf](https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/nimh-white-paper-csc-for-fep_147096.pdf)
- Meyer-Kalos, P. (2017, March 17). *Piper Meyer Kalos: Psychotherapy in CSC* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GDi207eb6s&feature=youtu.be>
- Nossel, I. (2017, March 24). *Dr. Ilana Nossel: Pharmacotherapy in CSC* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IU0dKjVqfs8&feature=youtu.be>